THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) A two percent Education Cess was imposed through the Finance (No.2) Act 2004 on income tax, excise duty, customs duty and service tax to finance Government's commitment to quality basic education. The proceeds of Education Cess are utilized exclusively for the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Mid-Day Meal Scheme of the Government.

(b) to (d) During the year 2005-06, an amount of Rs. 9993.35 crore was the expenditure under SSA by the States/UTs, which included the contribution of the States also. The expenditure in 2005-06 was considerably higher than the expenditure of Rs. 6598.39 crore in 2004-05. During the year 2005-06, States/UTs contributed Rs. 2727.31 crore as their share. The total unspent balance with the States/UTs at the end of 2005-06 was Rs. 2936 crore. The outlay for 2006-07 is Rs. 11,000 crore.

Modification of definition of literacy

2458. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to modify the definition of literacy according to international standards;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF ST&TE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The National Literacy Mission has defined the desired level of competencies in respect of reading, writing and numeracy, which is required for a person to be literate. As these competencies have been found to be adequate, there is no proposal to revise the same.